

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMCONSUL LENINGRAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4666
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ECON, EIND, ELAB, BTIO, PINT, OTRA, UR
SUBJECT: VISIT TO ARKHANGEL'SK

REF: STATE 210128

1. OFFICIAL VISIT BY CONSUL GENERAL BUCHANAN TO ARKHANGEL'SK, AUGUST 20-22 WAS MARKED BY NOW FAMILIAR EFFORT TO CIRCUMSCRIBE SCOPE OF HIS ACTIVITIES, EFFECTIVELY CONFINING HIM WITHIN CITY LIMITS. VISIT TO ARKHANGEL'SK CELLULOSE PAPER COMBINE (TSBK) OUTSIDE OF TOWN (WINNER OF RECENT "SOCIALIST COMPETITION" WITH FIVE OTHER SIMILAR COMBINES AROUND USSR) WAS REFUSED, BUT SUBSTITUTE VISIT TO SOLOMBALSK TSBK PROVED USEFUL. WHEN HE DECLINED OFFER TO REVISIT LENIN SAW MILL AND WOOD WORKING PLANT VISITED LAST DECEMBER, VISIT WAS ARRANGED TO CENTRAL SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR MECHANICAL PROCESSING OF TIMBER (TSNIIMOD). IT APPEARS THAT RESEARCH INSTITUTE ON EPIDEMIOLOGY (REFTEL) WAS CLOSED SOME 20 YEARS AGO AND THAT ARKHANGEL'SK STATE MEDICAL INSTITUTE HEADED BY SURGEON N.P. BYCHIKIN IS CONCERNED ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY WITH THE TRAINING OF MEDICAL STUDENTS. CONSUL GENERAL AND MRS. BUCHANAN WERE REFUSED PERMISSION TO VISIT

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"MALAYA KARELIYA", ALLEGEDLY MUSEUM SITE OF SOME 50 OLD WOODEN BUILDINGS A FEW MILES OUTSIDE OF TOWN. MAYOR OF ARKHANGEL'SK WAS, VERY PLAUSIBLY, ON LEAVE (HE WAS RECEIVED BY FIRST DEPUTY AMPERE IVANOVICH ZUMIN) AND ANOTHER GORKOM FIRST SECRETARY WAS AGAIN "SICK" (APPARENTLY A FEEBLE BREED).

2. THERE WERE NEVERTHELESS SOME INTERESTING OBSERVATIONS
AND INFORMATION PICKED UP DURING VISIT. DETAILS TO
FOLLOW BY AIRGRAM.
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-- DIRECTOR OF SOLOMBALSK TSBK SAID PRESENT TOTAL PRODUCTION OF 250,000 TONS IS BROKEN DOWN INTO 800 TONS OF CELLULOSE AND 25 TONS OF PAPER A DAY. BREAKDOWNS OF EQUIPMENT COST 4 PERCENT OF WORK TIME AND EACH ITEM OF EQUIPMENT MUST UNDERGO THIRTY HOURS OF OVERHAUL EACH MONTH. PLANT PRODUCED 72,000 TONS IN 1964: TARGET AT END OF PRESENT FYP IS 317,000 TONS; AND 400,000 TONS AT END OF NEXT FYP.

-- PLANT MAKES OVERALL PROFIT OF 18 PERCENT. PERHAPS BECAUSE OF ITS LOCATION NEAR WATER, ABOUT 80 PERCENT OF PRODUCTION IS FOR EXPORT. PLANT RECEIVES .6 PERCENT BONUS IN FOREIGN EXCHANGE FOR ITS FOREIGN EXCHANGE EARNINGS, AMOUNTING TO AROUND 150,000 RUBLES EQUIVALENT. (CURIOUSLY, BLOMORSKIY AZORY FOLK ART FACTORY DIRECTOR ALSO CITED 150,000 RUBLES AS SUM HER FIRM RECEIVES IN FOREIGN EXCHANGE FOR ITS EXPORT EARNINGS).

-- LABOR TURNOVER IN TSBK PLANT AMOUNTS TO 6.1 PERCENT IN MAIN PLANT EMPLOYING 2,500 WORKERS. AVERAGE WORKER OUTPUT
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EQUALS 25,000 RUBLES A YEAR WITH TARGET OF 40,000 RUBLES AFTER NEXT FYP WHEN PLANT WILL HAVE UNDERGONE EXTENSIVE ALTERATIONS.

-- IN AREA OF ECONOMY AND PROTECTION OF ENVIRONMENT, MAJOR EFFORT IS MADE TO USE SAWDUST AND SHAVINGS WHEN POSSIBLE FOR FUEL, PROVIDING 3-4 PERCENT SAVINGS. PLANT DIRECTOR ANTICIPATED HE WOULD BE COMPELLED NEXT YEAR TO PAY FOR 315,000 CUBIC METERS OF WATER WHICH PLANT USES EVERY 24 HOURS. HE IS INTERESTED IN CANADIAN SYSTEM WHEREBY 95 PERCENT OF WATER IS RECYCLED. HE EXPLAINED ONE REASON FOR INTEREST IS FACT THAT PLANT PRODUCES 7 TO 10 TONS OF NITRIC CHLORIDE EACH DAY WHICH CITY-WIDE BIOLOGICAL PURIFICATION SYSTEM OPERATED BY PLANT WILL NOT HANDLE. THERE ARE NO PLANS UNDERWAY TO CLEAN WATER CHEMICALLY, WHICH WOULD PROTECT FISH WHICH ARE BEING KILLED WHERE WATER IS PIPED INTO RIVER DOWNSTREAM FROM ARKHANGEL'SK. DIRECTOR IS NOT IN VIOLATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION LAWS SO LONG AS HE OPERATES BIOLOGICAL PURIFICATION SYSTEM PROVIDED FOR UNDER FYP. SIMILARLY, THERE ARE PRESENTLY NO CONTROLS AGAINST POLLUTION BY FOUL SMELLING AIR EMANATING FROM PLANT CHIMNEYS, BUT 8 MILLION RUBLES HAVE BEEN SET ASIDE FOR AIR

PURIFICATION EQUIPMENT UNDER NEXT FYP.
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3. TSNIIMOD IS ONE OF 8 TO 10 INSTITUTES WORKING FOR PULP AND PAPER MINISTRY. IT HAS 500 RESEARCHERS WORKING IN 20 LABORATORIES AND A FILIAL IS BEING SET UP IN KRASNOYARSK, IN PART TO DEVISE BETTER WAYS TO PROCESS VERY HARD SIBERIAN LARCH WOOD. AT AN EXPERIMENTAL FACTORY IN ARKHANGEL'SK, TSNIIMOD HAS ALLEGEDLY DEVISED AN ELECTRIC VACUUM DEVICE FOR DRYING WOOD AND HIDES SAFELY. AS PART OF A MAJOR PROGRAM

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TO FIND WAYS TO USE ALL SCRAP WOOD, SAWDUST AND BARK, TSNIIMOD HAS ALSO DEVELOPED MACHINERY FOR TURNING OUT 35 METER LONG SHEETS OF PRESSED SCRAP WOOD. THIRD CELLULOSE PAPER PLANT IS BEING BUILT IN ARKHANGEL'SK TO USE MIXTURE OF SAWDUST AND CHIPS TO PRODUCE CARDBOARD AND SECOND GRADE PAPER. OTHER FACTORIES IN ARKHANGEL'SK OBLAST ARE ALSO EXPERIMENTING IN TURNING OUT BUILDING MATERIALS OF KARBOLITE (PHONETIC) AND ARBOLITE (SAWDUST, CHIPS AND CONCRETE).

4. AMONG MAJOR PROBLEMS CITED BY TSNIIMOD DIRECTOR IS QUESTION OF RETAINING SPECIALISTS IN ARKHANGEL'SK AFTER THEY HAVE OBTAINED THEIR ADVANCE DEGREES AT HIS INSTITUTE. HIS MAJOR CONCERN IS TO FIND WAYS TO MECHANIZE FURTHER THE LUMBER INDUSTRY BECAUSE OF GROWING SHORTAGE OF LABOR. TO JUDGE BY THE LOCAL PRESS, UNUSUALLY BAD WEATHER THIS YEAR AND DETERIORATING LABOR DISCIPLINE ARE ALSO ADVERSELY AFFECTING PRODUCTION.

5. TSNIIMOD DIRECTOR NAMED THREE TYPES OF MACHINERY HE
WOULD LIKE TO BUY FROM U.S. (SEPTTEL).

6. FROM REMARKS OF DEPUTY GORISPOLKOM CHAIRMAN AND CHIEF
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ARCHITECT, IT WOULD APPEAR THAT BEAUTIFUL PICTURES OF
SOLOVETSKIY MONASTERY IN WHITE SEA AND OF WOODEN
CHURCHES IN ARKHANGEL'SK OBLAST ARE LARGELY POTEMKIN
PRODUCTS FOR FOREIGN PURCHASERS OF SOVIET ART BOOKS.
SOLOVETSKIY REMAINS IN STATE OF GENERAL DISREPAIR AND
FIGHT CONTINUES OVER HOW BEST TO PRESERVE
WOOD STRUCTURES SCATTERED THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRYSIDE, NOW
THAT POPULATION IS BEING CONCENTRATED AND MOVING FROM MANY
SMALL VILLAGES.

7. THERE WERE THE USUAL 24 SOVIET INTERCEPTOR AIRCRAFT
PARKED NEAR THE RUNWAY, WITH THEIR NOSES AND ROCKET
CARRIERS COVERED BY HOODS. CRUMP

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